THE BEGINNING BEFORE THE BEGINNING: HEGEL AND THE ACTIVATION OF PHILOSOPHY

Paul Ashton

ABSTRACT: This paper suggests that it is not enough to simply account for the 'beginning' in Hegel's philosophy. To capture the speculative depth of Hegel's thinking one must also account for the beginning of philosophy *as such*. That is, how or why the philosopher begins or 'the beginning before the beginning'. The question of the activation of the philosophical project itself is explored through Hegel's notion of the 'need of philosophy' and the fundamental relation between the historical event of the French Revolution and philosophical thinking. This question is explored through a critical discussion of those thinkers who are also concerned with the philosophy/revolution relation but are critical of Hegel's approach. It is suggested that these critical readings employ a thematic approach to both Hegel and philosophy more generally. This approach renders them unable to appreciate Hegel's philosophy speculatively and as a consequence the relation between philosophy and freedom, via the revolution, is misconstrued. In contradistinction to these readings the question of how one encounters Hegel's thought non-thematically is explored through an analysis of the willingness of the would-be philosopher to activate themselves into the philosophical project and dwell with Hegel in the 'we'. Rather than providing answers to the questions raised, this paper seeks to act as a provocation for a renewed encounter with Hegel's philosophy.

KEYWORDS: Hegel; Beginning; Revolution; Freedom; Modernity; Dwelling; We; Thought

INTRODUCTION

The one thing that almost all readers of Hegel agree upon is that for Hegel the question of a properly philosophical beginning, or 'with what must science begin', is of central importance to the activation of his philosophy. The problem of the beginning in Hegel's philosophy is multifarious, there is the beginning of the logic, or the system as a whole, there are new beginnings in each developmental cycle of the system—logic, nature and spirit—and there is the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[1] While not as universally agreed upon, the need for the 'beginning' to be *presuppositionless* is now generally also accepted. However, what has received less attention is the beginning of philosophy *as such*; how or why the philosopher begins—*the beginning before the beginning*.[2]

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, New York, Oxford, 1977, (henceforth PS).

2. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my friends and colleagues Toula Ni-

With Hegel, commentators generally agree that philosophy cannot '*presuppose* its *ob-jects* as given immediately by representation' (EL § 1)[3] and consequently it 'cannot *presuppose* the *method* of cognition [...] with regard to its beginning and advance' (El § 1). Appropriately, given this fundamental starting position, recent commentators have once again begun to recognize the importance of Hegel's systemic texts and in particular the *Science of Logic*.[4] This non-negotiable starting position for philosophy can possibly help us explain the dual tendency within the scholarship on Hegel's work. On the one hand many commentators take a thematic approach, focusing on any number of insights to be found in Hegel—usually from his political philosophy—while avoiding the implications of the speculative logic altogether.[5] On the other hand we find those who try to work through the texts systematically in compliance with Hegel's directive to be presuppositionless. The sheer impenetrability of the Hegelian texts ensures that even the most systematic among the commentaries face unexplainable aporias. However, what is perhaps more revealing are the silences common to both tendencies. On closer inspection of the aspects of Hegel's philosophy upon which the commentaries remain silent, or at least rather laconic, we can find a paradoxical unity. As most readers of Hegel scholarship will have experienced, it is often in the same key areas that the commentaries become silent or vague, regardless of one's perspective. Symptomatic of this are the paradigmatic examples of 'the role the absolute' and 'absolute knowledge'; a consequence of which is that in the two-hundred years since its publication there is no general consensus or 'accepted' reading of the *Phenomenology* or for that matter of the *System*.

However, I want to suggest that the silences found within these two tendencies stem from their continued failure to address the central question of what it means to encounter philosophy as such and Hegel as a philosopher; an omission that interrupts our ability to address the question of the activation of the philosophical project itself or the beginning before the beginning. To this extent, I will attempt to explore the conditions that prepare the ground for a more complete engagement or encounter with Hegel as a 'kindred spirit'.

Possibly the reason that the beginning before the beginning has not become an issue in the literature is that scholars have wisely heeded Hegel's warnings to not be like Scholasticus who tried 'to learn to *swim before he ventured into the water*' (EL § 10 R). Hegel argues that 'to want the nature of cognition clarified *prior* to science is to demand that it

---

colacopoulos, Claire Rafferty and George Vassilacopoulos for their valuable discussion and suggestions regarding this paper.

3. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic (1830), with the Zusätze: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. Theodore F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1991, (henceforth EL).

4. See three recent commentaries on the logic: John W. Burbidge, *Hegel's Systematic Contingency*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, David Gray Carlson, *A Commentary to Hegel's Science of Logic*, New York, Palgrave Macmillian, 2007, Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity*, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 2006. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1997, (henceforth SL).

5. There are numerous examples of this tendency but perhaps the most cited example is Allen W. Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

be considered *outside* the science; *outside* the science this cannot be accomplished, at least not in a scientific manner and such a manner is alone here in place' (SL 68). There is no doubt that Hegel is rejecting a kind of meta-philosophical perspective, that there exists some space outside of, or for that matter within, philosophy from which to clarify what philosophy is. This does not mean that philosophy cannot consider its own cognitive process, its own movement, but rather it cannot philosophically take account of its own movement prior to, or separate from, the very movement itself. Perhaps an extreme version of this thesis is Hegel's claim in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* that the absolute is 'with us, in and for itself, all along' (PS ¶ 73), for if it were not we would find ourselves trying to cognize something foreign or external to our thinking. If we accept Hegel's understanding that Science cannot take place outside of Science, where and how would such a consideration take place?

An obvious place to look for such a discussion is in Hegel's prefaces and introductions, a part of his work that is not part of the Science itself. What the prefaces and the pre-systemic texts offer us is not a *Science* of the beginning before the beginning—hence the superfluousness of prefaces to *Science*—but a series of reflections *on* philosophy and its conditions of activation that are not themselves the point of activation. There is no doubt that we have a problem here with regard to the beginning; either something is already scientific and thus not in need of a beginning or it is not, and from this perspective the question of how one would even recognize Science if they came across it becomes relevant. However, these texts at best only gesture to such a source of activation in a way that only makes sense to those already *activated* into philosophy and do not give an explicit account of such an activation. Thus even if we accept Hegel's claim that the absolute is there with us from the beginning, we would have to account for how and why we come to recognize what is already there?

Interests and Wants: How do We Begin?

The need to introduce the thinker to the scientific standpoint and the coextensive paradox of the supposed impossibility of a completely presuppositionless beginning has been a significant problem for readers of Hegel's system. This has led some commentators, including William Maker, to treat the *Phenomenology* as not properly scientific in itself, and thus not in need of a presuppositionless beginning, in an attempt to ensure a genuinely scientific beginning for the *Logic* (considered as speculative philosophy proper). To this extent, the *Phenomenology* is seen as merely a 'presupposition for presuppositionless science',[6] the fundamental purpose of which is the elimination of the dichotomous perspective of consciousness. More recently Stephen Houlgate has taken a version of this thesis even further in suggesting that the *Phenomenology* is in fact *not* a necessary part of Hegel's philosophy, arguing that: 'the *Phenomenology* does not provide the only possible route into speculative philosophy. Those who are prepared to suspend

6. William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 85.

their ordinary certainties can bypass the *Phenomenology* and proceed directly to the *Logic*'.[7] Thus for Houlgate the requirement here is that one take on or possess the appropriate *attitude* to begin presuppositionless philosophy *qua* speculative logic—that is, beyond the dichotomous perspective of consciousness. Furthermore, it is important that members of the would-be 'we' are 'persuaded to give up their "presuppositions and prejudices"', a persuasion that could take place through 'studying the history of modern philosophy' or even through the engagement with 'true religion'.[8] This rather strong claim suggests that the justificatory role of the *Phenomenology* is both contingent and instrumental.[9] From this position, what places one on the path that activates their philosophical drive so to speak, that annihilates presuppositions, is taken as given. Ignoring the activation of philosophy is no insignificant omission, for why would one without considerable cause seek to rid oneself of the dichotomous perspective of consciousness if, as Hegel informs us, doing so will lead them onto a path of despair (PS ¶ 78) and mean they must suffer the 'violence' of this 'inverted posture' (PS ¶ 26)? Of course on one level we can account for the activation of thinking through a rather mundane or commonsensical 'external' encounter with ideas and institutions in everyday life, but what this ultimately has to do with our encounter with philosophy *as such* is possibly limited or else at least requires some explaining. For that matter, who is this 'we' that has read Hegel's philosophy, who has been walking on its head down the violent highway of despair for two-hundred years now?

If we try to make sense of how these different readings take place and what motivates them—or for that matter what motivates Hegel in his comments regarding the beginning and activation of philosophy—we are struck by the perceptiveness of Kenley Royce Dove's recognition that the 'interpretation of the "we" tends to govern [...] one's view of the *Phenomenology* as a whole'.[10] However, as Dove also recognizes, despite the fact

7. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 146.

8. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 146.

9. Houlgate carefully defends this argument by drawing on Hegel's claim that 'nothing is needed to begin doing speculative philosophy except "the resolve (*Entschluß*), which can be regarded as arbitrary, that we propose to consider thought as such" (SL 68). Such a resolve requires that one "rid oneself of all other reflections and opinions whatever", and simply "take up *what is there before us*"—namely, the sheer being of thought, or thought as sheer being (SL 68)'. Also instructive here is EL § 78. On this see Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 145.

10. Kenley R. Dove, 'Hegel's Phenomenological Method', *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1970, pp. 615-41, p. 631. The fact that the 'we' plays this governing role is not surprising if we analyse the text. Hegel uses 'we' and its variants 'for us' and 'us' ('*wir*', '*unser*' and '*für uns*') over 180 times throughout every chapter of the *Phenomenology*. For a detailed account of each of these uses and a comprehensive study of the 'we' in Hegel see David M. Parry, *Hegel's Phenomenology of the "We"*, New York, P. Lang, 1988. However, in reading the 'we' strictly in terms of a project of philosophy already taken up, or as already activated, Perry interprets the 'we' simply as the 'reader' of the *Phenomenology* and does not account for what I am suggesting is Hegel's concern in the first place; the activation of philosophy and the 'we' as the dwelling space of the activated philosopher. However, Perry does recognize that there is a need to 'prepare' the 'reader' for the work and this activity must itself be done prior to philosophy understood as Science. This is done through the 'Preface' which is an 'ironic' gesture that functions in terms of what he describes as 'the liar's paradox'. Somehow by being ironic about the status of a preface a would-be thinker can engage with the preconditions in such a way that it does not undermine the phenomenological process as such. However, this strategy is far from

that nearly all commentators 'recognize' the 'need of an explanation' for the 'we', and do in fact offer some explanation, the 'explanations usually provided, are […] remarkably laconic'.[11] Laconicism is not usually a word one would associate with Hegel scholarship on the *Phenomenology* more generally. For example, one would be reticent to describe Hyppolite's *Genesis and Structure*[12] at 608 pages, Harris' *Hegel's Ladder*[13] at 1567 pages and Pinkard's *Hegel's Phenomenology*[14] at 451 pages, as laconic; yet perhaps with the exception of Hyppolite—who does try to deal with the 'we', even if it does remain largely suggestive—Dove's point is correct in that little is said or made *explicit* with regard to the role of the 'we'.

Accordingly, commentators who read the *Phenomenology* and its beginning in the manner outlined above, such as Houlgate, tend to see the 'we [as simply] the readers and phenomenologists'[15] who take up the task of working through the eradication of the dichotomous perspective of consciousness. Thus the 'readers of the *Phenomenology* are intended to be ordinary people (and philosophers tied to ordinary beliefs) who are unmoved by the modern spirit of philosophical self-criticism and so need to be persuaded that Hegel's presuppositionless, ontological logic is a justified and relevant science'.[16] Accordingly people such as this are typically 'firmly immersed in the world of everyday experience', but if they are to be elevated to the standpoint of Science 'they cannot be bull-headed [and] they must have some interest in what Hegelian speculative philosophy might disclose about the world and be open to what it may show them about their own everyday beliefs'.[17] What prepares the would-be reader of the *Phenomenology* is an 'openness of mind [that] may come from a basic ethical decency and intelligence, or indeed, it may stem from religion.'[18] Thus it is the 'openness of mind' of the consciousness of the would-be philosopher that permits and therefore 'anticipates the perspective of absolute knowing'.[19] But it could be argued that this way of thinking about the character of the 'we' and the anticipation of the perspective of absolute knowledge raises other questions. For example: what would it mean to have an 'interest' in the disclosure of the world, where would such an interest come from and how would one's mind be opened?

If we accept the value of Dove's insight that the 'we' plays a structuring role in the

---

convincing and opens up more problems for the would-be philosopher than it solves. For example, an ironic attitude to the text already assumes a level of philosophical engagement.

11. Dove, 'Hegel's Phenomenological Method', p. 629.

12. Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1974.

13. H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, 2 vols., Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997.

14. Terry P. Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

15. This statement of Houlgate's could be found in literally dozens of books on Hegel. See Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy: Freedom, Truth and History*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 2005, p. 57.

16. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 160.

17. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 160.

18. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 160.

19. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 160.

reading of the *Phenomenology* then an interesting comparison with Houlgate's interpretation is that offered by H. S. Harris. While Houlgate and Harris present substantially different readings of the *Phenomenology*—for example, the idea that the *Phenomenology* could be replaced with the study of history or religion is unthinkable for Harris, as the *Phenomenology* is most definitely 'a science in its own right'[20]—they nonetheless maintain similar positions on the 'we'. Like Houlgate, Harris presents the commonsensical view that the 'we' is the 'ordinary consciousness of the present world that wants to comprehend the world of experience philosophically'.[21] However, Harris does acknowledge that this is not just anyone, not just 'educated' people, rather it is the 'educated consciousness of the present that *wants to be comprehensive*'.[22] We can see here that Harris is trying to account for the intersubjectivity of the 'we' and the everydayness of the would-be philosopher, however, we can also see that Harris' position leaves questions unanswered. How or why does the 'we', *qua* 'educated consciousness of the present that *wants to be comprehensive*', come to take up philosophy in this form? In associating this desire '*to be comprehensive*' with 'the natural "desire to know"', as Harris does, the contingency and situatedness of the actualization of the philosophical outlook is missed. Similarly, certain problems arise with the use of language like 'the natural "desire to know"'; for example how does one take account for Hegel's insistence that '[f]reedom of Thought [constitutes …] a first condition' (LHP I 94)[23] of philosophy and that '[t]hought must be for-itself, must come into existence in its freedom, liberate itself from nature and come out of its immersion in mere sense-perception; it must as free, enter within itself and thus arrive at the consciousness of freedom' (LHP I 94)? In responding to a range of 'ontological' readings of the 'we' Harris—and again he is typical of the dominant readings—makes the point that the whole problem of the 'we' is a 'pseudo problem, which exists only for those who [… believe that an] unnatural way of talking is the proper expression of a philosophical consciousness'.[24] Harris continues that 'Hegel obviously means "us" to include anyone who *wants* to share the knowing that will be shown to be "absolute" in the book' the only prerequisite to be one of 'us' is 'that you must already have the sort of knowledge that he himself [Hegel] was endowed with during his own *Bildung*'.[25] That is, to 'be a possible member of the "We" one must know the history of our religious and philosophical culture'.[26]

But if Harris is critical of those who needlessly ontologize the 'we' then he is equally in danger himself of epistemologizing it. There is no doubt that 'absolute knowledge', the achieved cognitive perspective of the 'we', is a knowing and therefore an epistemic stance, but it is equally ontological in that it is *a way of knowing* that takes account of the

20. H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997, p. 110.
21. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, p. 178.
22. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, p. 178.
23. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. I Greek Philosophy to Plato, 3 vols., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, (henceforth LHP I).
24. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, p. 201 n. 30.
25. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, p. 201 n. 30.
26. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, p. 178.

essential unity of knowing and known, subject and object—that is, a stance taken within the space of the knowing/being mutual informing. Both Harris and Houlgate seem to be suggesting that the would-be philosopher's place in the 'we' is determined by their level of knowledge or intellect and that only when they have reached these heights of thinking—the height of Hegel!—are they capable of becoming a member of the 'we' and beginning the philosophical process. However, both thinkers already acknowledge the limitation of this view when they point to the would-be philosopher as having 'interest' and 'wants'. What their use of the terms 'interest' and 'want' suggests is that these two thinkers already indicate a position beyond the epistemic stance of the philosopher as merely someone who knows, to something ontologically more fundamental: that 'we' have the interest and want to disclose the world, presumably not in a dichotomous sense but speculatively. That is, Harris and Houlgate already point in the direction of where philosophy comes from and how it is activated before its activation; to a want that is a need.

THE NEED OF PHILOSOPHY

If we are to address the question of how and where the 'we' that has 'wants' and 'interests' arises, and is constituted, then the question of the *need of philosophy* also arises. In the introductory chapter to the *Difference*[27] essay, the 'Various Forms Occurring in Contemporary Philosophy' (D 85-118), Hegel explicitly addresses the question of 'the need of philosophy'. It has been recognized by many commentators, including the translator H. S. Harris, that this need can be understood as a dual need: 'the need (at this time) for philosophy, *and* what philosophy needs (at this time)'.[28] However, what both of these interpretations possibly miss is the *explicit* meaning of the phrase; by saying 'the need of philosophy' Hegel is drawing attention to the need *of* philosophy (as such), that is, *philosophy's* own need. With this meaning we can also add 'at this time', as although philosophy's need has an eternal dimension, it is nonetheless always situated historically. Thus we can say that what we are dealing with is *philosophy's own need at this time*.

But why is the question of *philosophy's own need at this time* important for us and what do we mean by 'this time' and why is 'this time' important in terms of this *need*? Hegel understands his philosophy as taking place in the space opened up by the rise of modernity, but more specifically Hegel understands his time, and consequently his thought *qua* of 'this time', to be the thought of *revolution*.[29] Thus despite the ambiguous status of the 'future' in Hegel's philosophy, we can see that just as the revolution through its *prac-*

27. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1977, (henceforth D).

28. Harris in Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, p. 89 n. 7. The second sense of 'need' is not to be confused with what I suggest below because 'need' in this usage is understood as what philosophy needs *in order to be a more satisfactory as a discourse*.

29. See Joachim Ritter: 'there is no other philosophy that is a philosophy of revolution to such a degree and so profoundly, in its innermost drive, as that of Hegel', Joachim Ritter, *Hegel and the French Revolution: Essays on the Philosophy of Right*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1982, p. 43.

tice announces the future, philosophy through its *thinking* gives conceptual form to the future. That is, Hegel's philosophy gives conceptual form to a future already announced through the event of the French Revolution.[30] Read in this way we can see that philosophy comes after the political, giving form to that which has been announced in practice, and that the want and interest of the philosopher, who wants to disclose the world, comes from an announcement that has already taken place. This is why according to Hegel philosophy always 'comes too late' (PR 23).[31]

However, as indicated above, the claim that for Hegel philosophy through its thinking gives conceptual form to the future cannot be made so easily: from the earliest commentaries the received view has been that Hegel's system has *no* place for the future. For example, the youngest of the Young Hegelians August Cieszkowski in his 1838 work *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*[32] argued that Hegel's philosophy is essentially contemplative and backward looking and does not take account of the future. Furthermore this early reading, via Marx's eleventh thesis, has been decisive in establishing boundaries for subsequent scholarship on the topic. In its extreme form this reading posits Hegel as a reactionary apologist for the Prussian state, and while this latter view has been demolished in the secondary literature[33] to the extent that no serious thinker accepts this idea today, the same cannot be said for the widely accepted view that Hegel's system has no place for the future. While there have been some attempts more recently to revive the concept of the future in Hegel[34] their impact has been limited. There is of course very good reason for the acceptance of the received view; Hegel repeatedly claims that philosophy arrives on the scene too late, that it ought not issue instructions for future ages and that one is always a thinker of his or her own age. There is no doubt that for Hegel hypothetical speculation on events to come is not and can not be considered philosophical—philosophy is always reflection on what is and never on what ought to be. This of course raises important questions regarding the role of the philosopher and their relation to world in the thinking of freedom and specifically whether we would-be

30. Habermas attributes to Hegel's epochal understanding the idea that 'the secular concept of modernity expresses the conviction that the future has already begun', see Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996, p. 5.

31. G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Allen Wood (ed.), trans. H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, (henceforth PR).

32. See August von Count Cieszkowski, *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*, Berlin, Veit, 1838. Sections of this text are translated in August Cieszkowski, *Selected writings of August Cieszkowski*, ed. and trans. Andre Liebich, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, August Cieszkowski, 'Prolegomena to Historiosophie', *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*, ed. and trans. Lawrence S. Stepelevich, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 53-90.

33. See for example chapters 4-8 of Jon Stewart (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1996. In particular see T. M. Knox, 'Hegel and Prussianism', in Jon Stewart (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1996, pp. 70-81.

34. Most notable here is Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic*, trans. Lisabeth During, New York, Routledge, 2004. However, this work, as with many others that try to resurrect the notion of the future in Hegel discuss the future in terms of time and specifically in terms of Heidegger's encounter with Hegel's notion of time. While this focus on temporality is reasonable enough it does prevent the possibility of what I am suggesting here that in some sense the future is already with us.

speculative philosophers need philosophy or whether philosophy needs us?

The Announcement of the Modern Age

Hegel gives a rather poetic account of the birth of this modern age, the age of revolution, in the preface to his *Phenomenology*:

> it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it into the past, and in the labour of its own transformation … The frivolity and boredom which unsettled the established order, the vague foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change. The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunburst which, in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world (PS ¶ 11). [35]

However, Hegel reminds us that this new era does not 'come on the scene' ready made, in its full actuality, but rather like a newborn child it comes in its 'immediacy or its Notion'. That is, this new world appears *in time* in its 'principle' or '*simple Notion*' (PS ¶ 12), and this principle is freedom. *Qua* principle, freedom appears as a task to be realized.[36] Thus the French Revolution's proclamation of universal freedom, the 'for all', is a principle lacking embodiment. The living spirit of the collective expression of freedom misfired. Thus 'the experience of what Spirit is' according to Hegel 'still lies ahead for consciousness' and what it is that lies ahead, spirit or freedom actualized, is the 'absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: "I" that is "We" and the "We" that is "I"' (PS ¶ 177). But this is to be expected, for as true *principle* spirit always comes on the scene in its self-loss. Both philosophically and politically speaking, freedom must claim itself as free, for if it were to simply 'come on the scene' ready-made it would not embody its own freedom freely. In this sense cognition of freedom is the principle of the conceptual form, that is of philosophy, and the promise of the future located in the present as a task to be realized. Thus, according to Hegel:

> Through knowledge, Spirit makes manifest a distinction between knowledge and that which is; this knowledge is thus what produces a new form of development.

35. It is interesting to compare this use of 'flash' with a miscellaneous note found in Hegel's hand: 'The subsistence of the community is its continuous, eternal becoming, which is grounded in the fact that spirit is an eternal process of self-cognition, dividing itself into the finite flashes of light of individual consciousness, and then re-collecting and gathering itself up out of this finitude—inasmuch as it is in the finite consciousness that the process of knowing spirit's essence takes place and that the divine self-consciousness thus arises. Out of the foaming ferment of finitude, spirit rises up fragrantly' cited in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, P. C. Hodgson (ed.), trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson and J. M. Stewart, vol. III The Consummate Religion, 3 vols., Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, p. 233 n191.

36. See Toula Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos, 'Philosophy and Revolution: Badiou's Infidelity to the Event', *Cosmos and History*, vol. 2, no. 1-2, 2006, pp. 210-25, p. 370. In this article the authors read the whole of Western philosophy in these terms. Thus '[s]ince the Greeks, western history can be understood as the yet to be resolved tension between a world that produces the revolutionary idea of the gathering "we" and at the same time constructs itself as the reality that denies the idea its actualization.'

> The new forms at first are only special modes of knowledge, and it is thus that a new Philosophy is produced: yet since, it already is a wider kind of spirit, it is the inward birth-place of the spirit which will later arrive at actual form. (LHP I 55)

This is the unique character and *strength* of spirit to survive the separation of its notion from its reality, that is to survive its own division and to create its freedom out of this division. Hence the need of philosophy, spirit's *need*, is to manifest itself out of its self-loss.

> For this reason formally the *essence* of spirit is *freedom*, the concept's [(Notion's)] absolute negativity as identity with itself. In accordance with this formal determination, the spirit *can* abstract from everything external and form its own externality, from its very life; it can endure the negation of its individual immediacy, infinite *pain*, i.e. it can maintain itself affirmatively in this negativity and be identical for itself. This possibility is its intrinsic abstract universality, a universality that is for itself (EPM § 382).[37]

If absolute negativity is the essential quality of spirit then we can see how spirit becomes spiritual, present to itself philosophically, out of the division of reality and its principle and thus how and why '[d]ichotomy is the source of *the need of philosophy*' (D 89)—because 'the appearance of the Absolute has become isolated from the Absolute and fixated into independence' (D 89). What is important here is that the image of the whole becomes apparent through the dichotomy, hence 'the appearance [of the Absolute] cannot disown its origin, and must aim to constitute the manifold of its limitations into one whole' (D 89). However, the absolute is no night in which all cows are black, for 'Reason is [not] altogether opposed to opposition and limitation. For the necessary dichotomy is One factor in life[—union, being the other]' (D 90-1). It is for this reason that Hegel suggests that

> [w]hen the might of union vanishes from the life of men and the antitheses lose their living connection and reciprocity and gain independence, the need for philosophy arises. From this point of view the need is contingent. But with respect to the given dichotomy the need is the necessary attempt to suspend the rigidified opposition between subjectivity and objectivity; to comprehend the achieved existence (*das Gewordensein*) of the intellectual and real world as a becoming' (D 91).

Therefore reason, as the infinite activity of becoming, creates a vision of the whole as united in its differentiation, and that in uniting what was rent asunder reason has 'reduced the absolute dichotomy to a relative one, one that is conditioned by the original identity' (D 91). As we can see, according to Hegel the need of philosophy emerges when we experience the divisions of the modern world and that it is through this need that the whole, *qua* spirit, becomes clear for us in its *alienated* being. What needs stressing is that while the 'dichotomy' is situated within specific histories, cultures, and events, for philosophy as such a more fundamental division is present. Hegel argues that the separation of self and world, or subject and object, is in fact the condition for both philosophy

37. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), Together with the Zusätze*, M. J. Inwood (ed.), trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller with revisions and commentary by M. J. Inwood, Oxford, Oxford, 2007, (henceforth EPM).

and of freedom understood philosophically. This is because for Hegel, freedom makes itself felt philosophically, when a kind of reflective attitude that distances the knowing subject from its known object emerges (LPH I 24 & 94-6). In this sense the Cartesian *cogito* and the Kantian turn to the subject, are radicalizations of an existing division that first emerges in the Greek polis.[38]

Hegel makes the point that the subjectivity of the ancient and modern philosopher is radically different. The 'plasticity' of the ancient self meant that 'one's philosophy determined one's [life] situation. An individual could actually *live* as a philosopher, and this often happened; that is to say, one's outward circumstances were determined in conformity with this purpose of one's inner life' (LHP 25-6 III 109).[39] However, '[i]n the modern times the relationship is different. Philosophers occupy no specific position in the state; they live in bourgeois circumstances or participate in public life, or in living their private lives they do so in such a way that their private status does not isolate them from other relationships' (LHP 25-6 III 109-10). In the modern world every person is absorbed into the powerful 'universal nexus, based on the understanding' and thus located in the fundamental division in which the 'inner [world within ourselves] and outer [determined by an external order] can coexist as autonomous and independent' (LHP 25-6 III 110). That this outer order can be relegated to an external order, which is in this sense embodied, the philosopher literally lives the dichotomy through which the whole becomes visable, philosophically speaking. Consequently, while Hegel designates several ancient thinkers as 'speculative', genuinely speculative awareness is the awareness inhabited by the modern. Hegel recognizes that 'speculative thinking consists in bringing the thoughts together, and they must be brought together—that is the whole point. The heart and true greatness of Platonic philosophy lies in it bringing-together things that in representation are distinct from one another (being and non-being, one and many, and so forth), so that we are not just passing over from one to the other' (LHP 25-6 II 202).[40] However, the task of gathering for Plato was one thing, but for the modern philosophers, who exist in a more radicalized dispersal, it is altogether another thing and greater speculative strength is required.[41]

---

38. On the relation of philosophizing to the Greek polis see George Vassilacopoulos, 'Plato's *Republic* and the End of Philosophy', *Philosophical Inquiry*, vol. XIX, no. 1-2, 2007, pp. 34-45.

39. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1825-1826*, trans. Robert F. Brown, J. M. Stewart and H. S. Harris, vol. 3 Medieval and Modern Philosophy, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, (henceforth LHP 25-6 III).

40. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825-6*, Robert F. Brown (ed.), trans. R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris, vol. 2 Greek Philosophy, Oxford, Oxford, 2006, (henceforth LHP 25-6 II).

41. For an original and sensitive treatment of the power of the formal subject, a subject determined by the 'universal nexus based on the understanding' see Toula Nicolacopoulos, *The Radical Critique of Liberalism: In Memory of a Vision*, Seddon, re.press, 2008, Toula Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos, *Hegel and the Logical Structure of Love: An Essay on Sexualities, Family and the Law*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEMATIC THINKING: TWO OBJECTIONS

In taking account of the very force that activates the philosophical project we can see that for Hegel the need of philosophy has two dimensions. On the one hand philosophy needs, or is always retroactively related to, an event that provides the existential conditions or the 'soil' from which philosophy can grow (see PS ¶ 26). On the other hand we can see that philosophy's need is to give conceptual shape to that which *is* so it can *be*—that is to give *conceptual* form to that which will become '*actual* form'. In not taking account of, or treating merely thematically, the beginning before the beginning—and therefore philosophy as the conceptual dwelling space of revolution—many commentators miss the purpose of Hegel's philosophy. For example, in taking up the 'we' as a *theme* or a *problem* in Hegel's thinking, the very possibility of understanding it as the dwelling space of the philosopher opened up by the revolutionary is hidden. Furthermore, given the relation articulated above between philosophy and the political, one may expect thinkers sympathetic to the future announced in the revolution—freedom expressed by and for all—to be more sympathetic, or at least sensitive, to Hegel's project as envisioned in these terms. However, this is not the case. To be sure, some of the most notable examples of a thematic treatment of Hegel's thinking have come from those thinkers informed by the same revolutionary events as Hegel.

This tendency can be found in the work of Habermas who has in turn played a paradigmatic role, if often not specifically acknowledged, in shaping Hegelian scholarship more generally. Habermas sees Hegel's philosophy becoming problematic in at least two ways, both of which from his perspective lead ultimately into conservatism and thus fail to provide the desired or appropriate philosophical grounding for social change. That is, while recognizing that Hegel is indeed the philosopher who first captures the revolutionary spirit of modernity,[42] Habermas believes Hegel ultimately does not and can not sustain this project. Consequently Habermas argues firstly, that in his early work Hegel offers us a radical vision which he later abandons and secondly, that his philosophy relies on the absolute as unwarranted presupposition. While we are using Habermas to engage Hegel on these two points, they are in fact familiar criticisms that any number of thinkers both hostile and sympathetic to Hegel would make.[43]

However, consideration of these criticisms offered by Habermas can potentially make explicit both the role that the relation between philosophy and the political play in the beginning and activation of philosophy for Hegel, and the kind of justification an appropriately presuppositionless beginning requires for Hegel's philosophy to actually be *philosophical*. Furthermore, it will hopefully become clear that by failing to see the appropriate relation between thought and its activation, Habermas may not only fail to

42. Recall that Habermas understands and attributes the articulation of modernity—as that period that 'can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from models supplied by another epoch; *it has to create its normativity out of itself*'—to Hegel. Consequently according to Habermas '[m]odernity sees itself cast back upon itself without any escape' Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 7.

43. A well argued example of an alternate reading of the 'we' that rejects the idea of the absolute as there with us from the beginning, a criticism also made by Habermas, is offered by Robert Sinnerbrink in this volume.

understand Hegel's project more broadly, but paradoxically find himself in the position in which his own philosophy can be seen to suffer the very fate that he ascribes to Hegel's. Focusing exclusively on the external dimension of 'the need of philosophy'—or on *the need at this time for philosophy* and *what philosophy needs at this time in order to be reformed* in contradistinction to *philosophy's own need at this time*—Habermas limits the possibilities for establishing an appropriate context to appreciate Hegel's philosophy in its own terms. What is more, the relevance of Habermas' criticisms of Hegel's system are further limited if one takes seriously what *Hegel* considers to be an appropriate context and beginning for philosophical thinking. That is, these criticisms are only criticisms if one accepts the thematic approach to philosophy, because what Habermas presents are criticisms of certain concepts thematically treated. Thus if the presence of the absolute (as with us from the beginning), and the speculative nature of Hegel's 'political' philosophy are understood *speculatively*, that is, in terms of the activation of philosophy and consequently in the context of the aforementioned revolution/philosophy relation—as opposed to Habermas' thematic treatment—, such critical readings can be seen to lack depth and sensitivity.

Philosophy and the Political

In characterizing Hegel's *Phenomenology* as 'half-hearted'[44] Habermas goes to the very core of his criticism of Hegel, which is nothing less than a criticism of the very purpose of Hegel's philosophical project as overly idealistic. As stated earlier, Hegel's project is considered by Habermas to be half-hearted or limited for two reasons.[45] Firstly, in presenting the view that would become dominant within Marxist criticism, Habermas argues that Hegel's early pre-*Phenomenological* writings—in particular his *Jena Philosophy of Mind*—'offered a distinctive, systemic basis for the formative process of the spirit, which he later abandoned',[46] in favour of a conservative philosophical system 'which once more devoured the whole world into philosophy'.[47] According to Habermas in Hegel's early writings 'it is not the spirit in the absolute movement of reflecting on itself which manifests itself in, among other things, language, labour, and moral relationships, but rather, it is the dialectical interconnections between linguistic symbolization, labour,

44. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, 2nd ed., London, Heinemann, 1981, p. 10.

45. This is not the extent of Habermas' critique of Hegel, rather they are two criticisms that are relevant in terms of this discussion.

46. Jürgen Habermas, 'Labour and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena Philosophy of Mind', *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel, Boston, Beacon Press, 1973, pp. 142-69, p. 142. While Habermas is drawing on an already emergent trend within Marxism—most notable is perhaps the influence of Lukács—to focus on the works of Hegel that are seen to be still under the influence of his study of political economy, this essay of Habermas' in my view should be recognized as a decisive essay in the development of the understanding of Hegel within the critical Marxist tradition. Also see György Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations Between Dialectics and Economics*, London, Merlin Press, 1975.

47. Jürgen Habermas, 'On Hegel's Political Writings', *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel, Boston, Beacon Press, 1973, pp. 170-94, p. 194.

and interaction which determine the concept of spirit'.[48] Here we see, in Habermas' eyes, Hegel offering the beginnings of a philosophical discourse that will eventually be developed, by others, into a materialist critical theory and not the idealism of the later Hegel. In this sense Marx is the genuine heir of the early Hegel and it is he who, despite his own shortcomings,[49] develops the so-called 'radical' dimension of Hegel's philosophy against Hegel's own reactionary systematization.

However, the mode of critique offered above does not touch Hegel. For example, when Habermas makes the claim that spirit does not, or should not be understood to manifest itself in the world via 'the absolute movement of reflecting on itself', but rather that we should understand material and social action as that 'which determine[s] the concept of spirit'[50] we could be tempted to agree with Habermas, as revolution *is* surely a form of material and social action. However, such agreement from an Hegelian perspective would be futile because this 'view' of Habermas' is formulated without consideration of the philosophical element itself, it is a mode of critique developed without consideration of the emergence and activation of philosophical thinking as such—the event of speculative philosophy. From this perspective we should not understand the relation between philosophy, the political (including the material conditions of a situation) and social change as a series of concepts that one formulates a philosophical position around, rather they should be understood as the very elements which are implicated within, or that become relevant through, the event of philosophy itself. That is, Hegel did not *decide* that philosophy comes after the revolution, or that 'change' is a relevant topic of philosophy. Rather in thinking or encountering the philosophical element as such, the relationship between thinking and change (and for that matter praxis), becomes apparent to the philosopher. What is relevant for philosophy is at the very least initially made relevant in and through thought itself.

Despite the importance that has been attached to these ideas here, it is important to note that there is nothing preventing the thinker from simply producing a philosophy without consideration of the beginning before the beginning or the very event of philosophy itself. On the contrary, it seems natural enough to simply start thinking philosophical thoughts; that is, the world produces situations that strike us as relevant and we simply begin thinking about them in a philosophical manner, the ultimate goal of which is to produce a unique or useful perspective on the problem. However, because of the ease in which we can enter the philosophical process, it could be argued that the challenge for us today is not to think of something important or unique—our culture produces new thoughts all the time—rather the challenge for us as philosophers is to *resist* this path. What is required is that we try to encounter the very activity and activation of thinking itself, so as not to presuppose what is most essential to the philosophical undertaking. More specifically speaking, it is not that we simply *can* just start thinking that is the problem, or even that we *should* resist this particular activity, rather

48. Habermas, 'Labour and Interaction', p. 143.
49. See Habermas, 'Labour and Interaction', pp. 168-9.
50. Habermas, 'Labour and Interaction', p. 143.

I want to suggest that when a thinker takes the activity of thinking for granted without considering the activation of this thinking, or at least gives up trying to account for it, their thinking becomes limited by this omission and consequently produces concepts shaped by that limitation. According to Hegel, thinking that does not take account of itself remains reflective and consequently produces thoughts—regardless of what may be claimed by the thinker involved—that remain within the shape of 'consciousness' and thus informed by its dichotomous relation. When thought is shaped in 'the way of consciousness' the dichotomous relation between subject and object produces claims that are appropriate to empirical verification. That is, the claims produced either correspond to reality, and are thus labeled 'true', or they do not. It is for this reason that a theory such as Marx's can, on the one hand be disproved in time—as it has more or less been for Habermas—in that it does not adequately correspond empirically to the world as it currently appears. While on the other hand such a theory relies on a rather voluntaristic element with regard to its transformation into praxis.[51] Hence, that Marx produces a theory of revolution and social change, is itself not necessarily related to the *actual* transformation of that theory into practice.

Despite Habermas' critique of Marx's thought, he remains a part of the Marxist tradition in that his thinking is informed by the command that it is no longer adequate for philosophers to merely interpret the world—Hegel is here of course envisioned as the paradigmatic case of an 'interpreter' in this sense—the point is to change it. Despite the 'attractiveness' of a command such as this for the philosopher who wants to be revolutionary—or dwell in the revolutionary space opened up by Hegel—any thought, regardless of the attractiveness of its 'content', produced by a mode of thinking that does not address the fundamental question of the activation of philosophy as such, remains relative to the givenness of its production as a thought. This could explain why we find ourselves today transfixed by the seemingly unanswerable question of how thought can relate to the world that it seeks to change and how the world, considered as a changeable entity, relates to thought without thinking becoming thematic and voluntaristic. After all, this command is a pronouncement in, and is given shape through, philosophical thinking.

Thought of in this way, despite claims made to the contrary, it is not Hegel that produces a philosophy that gives thought too radical a function, that of actually changing the world, but rather Habermas and Marx. Despite this, both philosophical approaches see the French Revolution marking the birth of a new age, an age in which a radical form of freedom has been announced and will eventually be actualized—what philosophy has given *conceptual* form to will eventually become '*actual* form'. The difference is that for Hegel the world will change to fully embrace the reality of freedom not because we can think how to change the world, as is the case for Marx and Habermas, but because the event of speculative thinking expresses the changeability of the world itself. But if this is the case, then according to Hegel, it follows that the world must have

51. It is important to note that Habermas accepts that this is the case for his thinking, but would claim it as a reality for all thought.

already changed in order for its changeability to be embraced by speculative philosophy, and that philosophy as post-revolutionary can be understood as a *recollection* of this embracing.

Absolute Knowledge as a Presupposition

According to Hegel the cognitive perspective from which the philosopher recollects is absolute knowledge, a way of thinking that takes place within the unified perspective of the knowing and the known, a perspective that Habermas does not accept Hegel does or can achieve. Thus it is the character of absolute knowledge that forms the basis of the second sense in which Habermas thinks that Hegel's philosophy is 'half-hearted'. Reading absolute knowledge epistemologically, Habermas argues that

> there is something half-hearted about the *Phenomenology of Mind*. The standpoint of absolute knowledge is to proceed with immanent necessity from phenomenological experience. But because it is absolute, it does not really need to be justified by the phenomenological self-reflection of mind; and strictly speaking it is not even capable of such justification.[52]

Habermas suggests that 'from the very beginning Hegel presumes as given a knowledge of the Absolute'[53] a presupposition that, regardless of Hegel's critique of (Kantian) knowledge as such, would have to in turn presuppose such a critique because 'the possibility of just this knowledge [of the absolute] would have to be demonstrated according to the criteria of a radicalized critique of knowledge'.[54] However, it could be argued that in epistemologizing the absolute, Habermas fails to understand the role it plays in Hegel's system. In this way Habermas produces a reflective response to absolute knowledge—the cognitive perspective of the 'we'—in much the same as other commentators[55] in that he thinks of absolute knowledge thematically as something that can be 'known' epistemologically rather than as the ontologically constituted dwelling space of the revolutionary thinker. This is why the absolute is with us from the beginning; not because we know something in the way consciousness knows it, but rather that we know it in being claimed by what is, thus philosophy becomes a recollection.

Given this, what requires justification philosophically speaking in Hegel's work is that which is *scientific*—that is, the two *scientific* systems: the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedic System* including the *Science of Logic*—but not the pre-systemic beginning before the beginning, or the activation of philosophy as such. Justification and necessity—the demands that make a thinking *scientific* in the Hegelian sense—only become necessary or in need of justification themselves within philosophy itself, or rather it is the philosophical process itself that makes justification and necessity an issue for thinking in the first place. The activation of the philosophical project cannot have necessity itself or it

52. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 10.
53. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 10.
54. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 10.
55. For a brief account of Harris' objection to the absolute as being with us from the beginning see H. S. Harris, *Hegel: Phenomenology and System*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1995, pp. 13-4.

would already presuppose the philosophical.

Thus the kind of objections made by Habermas are pre-empted by Hegel in the preface to the *Phenomenology* and also more explicitly in the *Difference* essay when Hegel recognizes that '[o]ne may require of propositions that they be justified. But the justification of these propositions as presuppositions is still not supposed to be philosophy itself, so that the founding and grounding gets going before, and outside of, philosophy' (D 94). Thus philosophy needs to be 'furnished with some sort of vestibule' and this is why, as has been suggested above, that '[t]he need of philosophy can be called the *presupposition* of philosophy' (D 93). But this 'presupposition' is nothing other than the 'need that has come to utterance' (D 93). Accordingly Hegel suggests that the presupposition of philosophy, the *uttered need*, is thus the need 'posited for reflection' and that because of the very nature of reflection 'there must [in fact] be two presuppositions' (D 93). The first presupposition is 'the Absolute itself'[56] that according to Hegel 'is already present'—'how otherwise could it be sought?'—whereas the second presupposition is associated with the philosopher, in that consciousness must have 'stepped out of the totality, that is, it may be taken to be the split into being and not-being, concept and being, finitude and infinity' (D93). Therefore while the absolute must be there with us from the beginning, from the fixed determinate standpoint of the dichotomy 'the absolute synthesis is a beyond, it is the undetermined and the shapeless' (D 93). This is why the philosopher, while dwelling in the already present absolute, begins as the dichotomous figure of consciousness.

It follows from this that 'the task of philosophy consists in uniting these presuppositions: to posit being in non-being, as becoming; to posit dichotomy in the Absolute, as its appearance; to posit the finite in the infinite, as life' (D 93-4). At this point it is worth recalling Hegel's warning against thinking of 'the need' as itself reflective when he makes the point that this kind of language 'is clumsy … for the need acquires in this way a reflective form' (D 94) that it does not actually have. What is difficult to understand here, but nonetheless underlies the whole of Hegel's thinking and our ability to understand the formation and movement of this thought, is the role of the knowing/being mutual informing. Readings of Hegel's philosophy, like Habermas', that characterize it as overly subjective or hypostatize the absolute[57] tend to under-emphasize the speculative interrelation of being and knowing. Hegel is quite explicit on this mutual informing when he says that:

> Reason is the truth that is in and for itself, and is the simple *identity* of the *subjectivity* of the concept with its *objectivity* and universality. The universality of reason, therefore signifies the *object*, which in consciousness qua consciousness was only given, but is now itself *universal*, permeating and encompassing the I. Equally it signifies the pure *I*, the pure form overarching the object and encompassing it within itself (EPM § 438).

56. 'Reason produces [the Absolute], merely by freeing conscious from its limitations. This suspension of the limitations is conditioned by the presupposed unlimitedness' (D 93).

57. Charles Taylor's influential work is also a notable inclusion in this way of thinking. See Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Consequently the so-called unjustified beginning is not the problem it may seem to be, as Hegel's philosophy is concerned with what *is*. Philosophy is activated and sets to work precisely in anticipation of its goal, or in the terms we have outlined here, it sets to work giving conceptual form to that which has already been announced. This is because the Hegelian philosopher encounters the principle of freedom via the force of the revolutionary claims of the era, and the subsequent retreat of these claims from the life-world of the philosopher. Therefore the requirement for the Hegelian philosopher to *justify* the existence of their object, in this case the manifesting absolute, does not take the same form as the requirement attendant to formal modes of thinking and the thinkers of these modes. Because there is a mutual informing of being and knowing for the speculative philosopher, the lack of externality—an externality to the knowing being relation that is absolute—means that justification takes on a different *form* than it does for the empiricist, metaphysician or critical thinker whom, according to Hegel, presupposes the givenness of their object which includes their mode of cognition and its advance (see EL § 1). This need for justification is determined by the very givenness that is the source of the original demand. Seen in this light the central concern is not to make sense of the absolute per se, but rather that one must allow themselves to be captured by the claim of freedom and claim this claiming as their own. What would be required here from the Hegelian perspective is not an epistemological[58] engagement with the being of the absolute, but rather a dwelling within it as already claimed by the revolutionary spirit of freedom. This does not mean that there is no justification required and that the philosophical enterprise becomes a kind of mystical experience, rather that the kind of justification that needs to take place, a justification that Hegel believes he performs in his *Phenomenology*, is of a wholly different order than what is *expected* by contemporary philosophical discourse. In this sense Hegel's philosophy is of another time. To be sure, the *certainty* of this anticipation and activation is only *known* as justifiably *true* 'by exposition of the system itself' (PS ¶ 17).

If we compare the introduction to Hegel's first published work, the *Difference* essay, to the 'Preface' in the *Phenomenology*—two works that span the time that Habermas considers to be Hegel's more radical period—we can see a striking continuity between the two. To be sure, the similarity relates particularly to Hegel's discussion of the claims and aims of philosophizing itself which seem to be the disputed territory for Habermas. Given this it is reasonable to ask, despite the subtlety and depth of his analysis, why Habermas chooses to focus on unpublished and incomplete lecture manuscripts to simply find what must be considered rather common place insights. The fact that *Hegel* made these observations in the context of spirit/world relations—regardless of the veracity, or lack thereof, of such a way of thinking—seems to lack any kind of necessity for Habermas and indeed adds little to the overall nature of the observations or insights garnered. For has not Marx, as Habermas actually claims, not said much the same things but more poignantly? If these insights extracted from Hegel lack what Habermas acknowledges is

58. According to Habermas 'Hegel replaced the enterprise of epistemology with the phenomenological self-reflection of mind [spirit]' Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 7.

what *Hegel* sees as most fundamental, what does Hegel offer us here? In turning Hegel 'the right way up' does Habermas not invite us to see in Hegel what can be seen in just about any thinker of the post-Hegelian period?

It seems that in the criticism of Hegel as a political conservative Habermas wants Hegel to be Marx, and in the criticism of Hegel as dogmatically presupposing the absolute, he wants Hegel to be Kant. However, Hegel is neither of these thinkers and if we want to encounter Hegel as Hegel—to be kindred with him—we need to meet him somewhere. In the remainder of this essay consideration will be given to the question of what would be involved in encountering Hegel as Hegel and what the conditions of the activation of Hegelian philosophy are according to this encounter. Thus if the issues that have been raised so far have validity, and if certain aporias remain within thinking, then the following questions become relevant for us: how do we take up Hegel?; where do we meet Hegel philosophically?; and how is Hegelian philosophy activated in this light? However, these questions have an added dimension: it would be fair to ask why we are not all Hegelian philosophers already, for didn't the French Revolution as the soil of philosophy announce freedom universally 'for all'? If our 'interest' and 'want' in philosophy comes from our historical claiming as free subjects, why do we not all philosophize *qua* Hegelian? To be sure, as we know, we are certainly *not* all Hegelian philosophers; hence the tendency in the literature to identify 'we' philosophers with an elite that knows. But why and how does one find themselves within the 'we', and what must one *think* to be a philosopher as opposed to a political theorist, a free market entrepreneur or a researcher? Where must our interest lie? To be more explicit, if the commentaries and critiques of Hegel outlined above miss what is most fundamental in Hegel when they approach his thought 'thematically', then the question of how one encounters Hegel's thought *non-thematically* arises.

THINKING THE THOUGHT THAT GIVES RISE TO PHILOSOPHY

At the beginning of the third part of his lecture series on Nietzsche[59] Heidegger claims that we will only know who Nietzsche '*is* and above all who he *will be*' when we are able to think the thought that gave shape to the phrase 'the will to power'.[60] Heidegger goes on to say that we will never experience who Nietzsche is by an examination of his life history, as a historical figure, a personality or a psychological object; furthermore, we are even unable to encounter Nietzsche as a thinker through a presentation of his writings. In this sense, for Heidegger it is this *one* single thought that destines Nietzsche to be an 'essential thinker' as opposed to a mere 'writer' or 'researcher' who may have

59. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Vol. III: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics & Vol. IV: Nihilism*, David Farrell Krell (ed.), trans. Joan Stambaugh, David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi, vol. 3 & 4, 4 vols., San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, p. 3ff.

60. Heidegger links Nietzsche's thought of 'the will to power' with his standing as the last metaphysician. Notwithstanding Heidegger's reading of the history of metaphysics and Hegel as the most radical, and thus the most metaphysical of metaphysicians, Heidegger's account of the encounter with a thinker is instructive.

many thoughts; for who Nietzsche really *is* can only be understood as the one 'that trod the path of the thought' that led to the saying 'the will to power'. Following Heidegger's approach we might then ask what then is, or should we understand as, Hegel's one great thought, assuming that he is what Heidegger would describe as an 'essential thinker'?

This question appears to be extremely difficult to answer when one considers the sheer depth and scope of Hegel's field of inquiry. For many, this one great thought would lie in his political philosophy, the field that has the most general appeal in the system, for others it would lie in his bringing forth of history as a key philosophical discipline. Perhaps the only facet of Hegel's philosophical system that most agree his defining moment would not occur in is his *Philosophy of Nature*,[61] however, even this much-maligned aspect of the system has its supporters these days. It seems that Hegel's philosophy contains an almost unlimited number of 'insights' that have shaped thinking in the proceeding centuries; no philosophy of the nineteenth or twentieth century stands apart from Hegel's thinking, untouched by its scope.

It seems reasonable that the one guiding thought, if it is indeed to be the one *singular* thought, should treat a thinker's thinking as a whole, that it should be a thought that unifies that thinking, and that it should single that particular thinker out from all other thinkers. However, one thought that does *not* separate Hegel from other truly great thinkers, but may nonetheless help us in our enquiry, is Hegel's belief that his philosophy is the last philosophical system and that with him *philosophy has come to an end*. If we take Hegel's self-understanding of his philosophy in relation to all others seriously, then we might expect to find some insight to our question in the conclusion to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Understood in Hegel's terms, the *Lectures* can be considered as the autobiography of philosophy itself. The 'final result' of this autobiographical account of philosophy culminates with the conclusion that:

> The ultimate aim and business of philosophy is to reconcile thought or the Notion with reality [...] The result is the thought which is at home with itself, and at the same time embraces the universe therein, and transforms it into an intelligent world [... This a]bsolute, pure, infinite form is expressed as self-consciousness, the Ego. This is the light that breaks forth on spiritual substance, and shows absolute content and absolute form to be identical;—substance is in itself identical with knowledge […] *i.e.* it recognizes pure Thought or Being as self-identity (LHP III 545-6 & 550).[62]

In understanding his thought in this way Hegel claims his philosophy as the culmination of the 'only one Philosophy' embodying the 'one principle' (LHP III 552), and thus draws the strong link between his thinking and that of the ancients in that '[t]he philosophy of the ancients had the absolute Idea as its thought' (LHP III 548), and that 'Aristotle was the first to say that *voûs* is the thought of thought' (LHP III 546), or even

61. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature: Being Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, 1830*, trans. M. J. Petry, 3 vols., London, George Allen & Unwin, 1970.

62. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. III Medieval and Modern Philosophy, 3 vols., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, (henceforth LHP III).

more explicitly when he approvingly quotes Parmenides:

> Thought, and that on account of which thought is, are the same. For not without that which is, in which it expresses itself (*ἐν ᾧ πεΦατισμένον ἐστὶν*), wilt thou find Thought, seeing that it is nothing and will be nothing outside of that which it is (LHP I 253) .

Hegel recognizes that Parmenides' essential claim is that 'Thought produces itself, and what is produced is thought. Thought is thus identical with Being, for there is nothing besides Being, this great affirmation' (LHP I 253) and that this is *the* point of the tradition as a whole. Hegel's one great thought, the thought that he thinks brings the whole of philosophy to a close—the thought that 'reconcile[s] thought or the Notion with reality'—is not *his* thought at all but a thought that comes from the very beginnings of philosophy. Thus we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation, if we try to think the thought that gave rise to Hegel's one great thought we find ourselves in the situation of thinking the thought that leads to the saying that *I have no new thoughts*. What is more, we can understand as Hegel himself does, that his philosophy offers us nothing new in a more general sense; that is, even if we take a thematic approach we can see that Hegel does not offer any new or truly original insights: the absolute, the dialectic, speculative thinking, recognition, the unity of unity and difference, these have all been thought by others prior to Hegel. As Frederick Beiser points out there 'is not a single Hegelian theme that cannot be traced back to his predecessors in Jena'.[63] How then do we think the thought that makes Hegel a genuine and unique thinker if that thought is indeed that *I have no new thoughts*? Furthermore, how can this be the case when we *know* that Hegel is perhaps one of the *most* original, radical and fundamental of thinkers? What does it mean for a fundamental thinker to say I have no new thoughts?

What is easily missed if we follow this investigative approach is that Hegel does not offer any specific theme or *content* of thought that we can identify as unique or original but rather that the thought of the essential unity of thought and being *comes to itself* in *his* thought. Hegel claims that philosophy becomes conscious of itself as the world's principle in his thought; that philosophy has become *self-conscious* and thus has finally realized itself as genuine *Science*, offering us a new *form* of thinking, absolute knowledge.[64] According to Hegel speculative philosophy thinks the world as embodying its own principle, but it is only as *scientific* that philosophy 'knows itself as absolute spirit' (LHP III 552).

If we take seriously Heidegger's claim that what is important for us is not so much to

63. Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 10. However, Beiser, erroneously in my view, also suggests that Hegel was wilful in his expropriation of ideas in that he claimed them as his own. If anything Beiser is *underplaying* Hegel's sense of his own philosophy. He did not need to erroneously 'exaggerate' his own 'originality' because he saw himself as the one who *consummated* these ideas or made them philosophical.

64. Recall that in Hegel's usage 'Science' refers to genuinely self-determining philosophy that forms itself as a system. Philosophy is no longer *merely* philosophy in the work of Hegel, that is 'the love of knowing', as knowing is no longer external to its being, it has become '*actual* knowing' (PS ¶ 5). It is true, as we have said, that others claim the form of the speculative, for example Schelling, but his grasp of the speculative from the Hegelian point of view remains rather intuitive, a point borne out by his continual retreat to the sensual (Art) and the theological (Religion).

think or even identify the essential thought of a thinker—in Nietzsche's case 'the will to power'—but rather to think the thought that gave shape to the phrase, then we can see in the case of Hegel rather than capturing the phrase 'absolute knowledge' or even to think the 'unity of thought and being', we need to '[tread] the path of thought' as such. But what would be involved in treading the path of this thought? And if Hegel's philosophy is the philosophy that offers us no new thoughts, what would it mean to tread the trodden path anew without stepping in the footsteps that muddy the ground? What is implicit in Heidegger's reflection on Nietzsche becomes relevant to our argument here when he states that what is essential for us, as would-be philosophers, is not a matter of one's *ability* to identify the thought, but rather it is our *willingness* to walk the path; to think the thought that gives rise to the thought. In Hegel's terms we can understand this willingness as the willingness to dwell in absolute knowledge.[65] Absolute knowledge is not the thought but the trodden path, that through Hegel we can see as the path of all true philosophical thinking. What then makes Hegel an essential thinker for us is not *a thought* but that he exposes to us the dwelling place where we, as philosophers, already dwell.

Hegel offers us nothing new in terms of determinate ideas to base our philosophical (or political) project on, but rather shows us the context in which ideas are activated and the dwelling space in which conceptual form is given to the future. This allows us to understand that it is the 'willingness' or the 'want' of the would-be philosopher to dwell in this space that is important, rather than a cognitively achieved height. What has to be noticed is that this space in which the philosopher dwells is the 'we' itself. Understood in terms of the philosopher that expresses his or her *willingness* to embrace the announcement of their freedom by giving conceptual form to it, the 'we' takes on an ontological dimension. This is in contradistinction to the predominantly epistemological reading that characterizes the 'we' in terms of the cognitive capacity of the philosopher. This is why Science *needs* to 'provide [the philosopher] with the ladder to this standpoint [of science, and why it] should show him this standpoint within himself' (PS ¶ 26). If absolute knowledge, as the dwelling place of the philosopher, is understood epistemologically, such a ladder would be superfluous, as Habermas and others have argued.

This analysis of the willingness of the would-be philosopher to activate themselves into the philosophical project and dwell with Hegel in the 'we' is given account by Hegel in the preface to his *Phenomenology* in the following way: '*Pure* self-recognition in absolute otherness, this Aether *as such*, is the ground and soil of Science or *knowledge in general*. The beginning of philosophy presupposes or requires that consciousness should dwell in this

65. In light of the criticism made earlier that Habermas' and Marx's social theory tends toward 'voluntarism', the use of a term like 'willingness' with relation to Hegel's philosophy needs defending. The 'willingness' of the would-be philosopher discussed in the text above does not introduce a voluntaristic element in the way that I have suggest one potentially exists in Habermas' and Marx's thinking, because for Hegel the philosopher always arrives too late—that philosophy is always a recollection—and thus the willingness of the individual to raise themselves into the Aether and dwell philosophically primarily impacts on their own posture as a thinker and not their freedom as theorized. According to Hegel philosophical thinking does not involve itself in politics in this sense, as it does not issue instructions on how the world ought to be.

element' (PS ¶ 26). However, given that this pure self-recognition is 'pure spirituality as the *universal* that has the form of simple immediacy' then this beginning before the beginning, 'achieves its own perfection and transparency only through the movement of its becoming' (PS ¶ 26) which is the movement found firstly in the body of the *Phenomenology* itself. That is, in 'order to be able to live—and [actually] to live—with Science and in Science' the would-be philosopher must 'have raised itself into this Aether' (PS ¶ 26) *before* he or she can think scientifically.

What is important to recognize here is that the individual *qua* philosopher can survive in this Aether and is thus appropriate to it—recall that Science must show 'this standpoint within himself'—because 'the individual is the absolute form [… or] unconditioned *being*' (PS ¶ 26). The philosopher raised into the Aether is appropriate to the task of giving conceptual form to what has been announced in the revolution because, just as with Science that knows that the 'situation in which consciousness knows itself to be at home is […] one marked by the absence of Spirit' (PS ¶ 26), so too does the revolutionary spirit propelled to philosophy know that the world as it was before the revolution is equally marked by an absence of spirit, the world as it was is no longer habitable. However, the revolution has not fully actualized itself in the world as achieved principle and thus it remains a task for Science to show '*that* and *how* this [spiritual] element belongs to it' (PS ¶ 26). That is, emerging immanently to the political situation of the world itself, out of 'division', so to speak, 'Science lack[s] this *actual* dimension, it is only the content as the *in-itself*, the *purpose* that is as yet still something *inward*, not yet Spirit, but only spiritual Substance. This *in-itself* has to express itself outwardly and become *for-itself*, and this means simply that it has to posit self-consciousness as one with itself' (PS ¶ 26). However, this account assumes a willingness on the part of the philosopher to dwell in Science; but what is the condition of this willingness, what does it mean to be willing in this sense?

The Kindred Spirit

In the *Difference* essay, which we have already identified as a very important text, Hegel gives an explicit account of the conditions under which an appropriate encounter with philosophy must take: 'The living spirit that dwells in a philosophy demands to be born of a kindred spirit if it is to unveil itself' (D 86). The living spirit, understood in this way, 'brushes past the historical concern which is moved by some interest', past the 'curious collector of information' and the discoverer of 'alien phenomenon' who are not concerned to 'reveal [their] own inwardness'—'spirit itself slipped away between [their] fingers'—and seeks that space where 'there is truth to be had' (D 86). These inferior modes of thinking that Hegel associates with the understanding—the thinking of consciousness situated in the subject/object dichotomy—fail to capture the living spirit the way speculative philosophy does.

To be kindred one must be both '*kin*' and '*re-d*': To be Hegel's kin we must be related, familiar, to be part of his family. But this does not mean that we go along blindly with

Hegel, rather to be a member of a family is to be a member of a collective that dwells together. We must dwell together with Hegel. To be 're-d', as with 'kin', means to share the same blood, but re-d also means 'again', 'to return to' or 'go back'—stop—to Hegel, but it also means to 'come after', albeit in terms of, or in opposition to; red is dangerous, forbidden and urgent and finally red is revolution. Accordingly to be kindred with Hegel we must open ourselves to return again to Hegel in order to dwell in the dangerous space of thought so as to conceptualize the world according to its principle.

One of course cannot merely be kindred with Hegel, we must, like Hegel himself, be kindred with the living spirit, for Hegel only exists for us as, and in, the living spirit. Our encounter with Hegel *qua* philosopher is nothing more than an invitation to dwell in the dwelling place of the philosophers for it is through this encounter that the living spirit becomes explicit. Thus, if we must dwell in the dwelling place of philosophers in order to be philosophical then Hegel's *Phenomenology* and *System* become a secondary concern of ours as would-be philosophers. Not secondary in the sense of unimportant, rather secondary in that it is only when one has claimed, or rather has been claimed by, the revolutionary spirit, and activated themselves as a philosopher, that these systematic texts, the architecture of the philosophical, becomes comprehensible to us. We must first raise ourselves into the house of the philosophers, we must learn to dwell philosophically first. To be kindred requires that we willingly claim the revolutionary nature of the living spirit and be committed to dwelling in the claim. A 'claim' is also, of course, a dwelling space itself, but not an unoccupied one, rather it is a place where one 'stakes a claim', and through, which one gains a right or 'title', in this case the right to philosophy.[66]

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE TRAGEDY OF HEGELIAN THINKING

If what has been said has value it could be argued that the singular thing that makes Hegel an essential thinker is that he creates the space for us to dwell philosophically and provides a ladder into this Science. It is for this reason that, with Foucault, it is not so easy to 'escape Hegel'[67] because in escaping Hegel it is not his ideas or insights that need overturning or escaping, but the very dwelling space of the philosopher. Thus the consequence of escaping Hegel is to return from the inverted world to the everyday given world, to become a reflective collector of information (D 86), to become a writer or researcher. Nonetheless, people fail to understand the extent to which, 'crushed before

66. When one stakes a claim in the already claimed dwelling space the history and the occupants of the claim become relevant for the claimant. It is for this reason that one cannot honestly claim the title of philosopher without acknowledging and living with those already dwelling in the claim.

67. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith and Rupert Sawyer, New York, Pantheon, 1972, p. 235. 'But truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies a knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.'

[…] the immensity of the claims made by the human spirit' (LHP II 10),[68] today we *have* managed to escape, or rather have *denied* the Hegelian moment within ourselves. This can be seen in the triumph of the 'intellect' over 'reason', of the special sciences (including the social and natural sciences and the formal thinking of analytic philosophy) over speculative philosophy, unfreedom over freedom and the dominance of instrumental thinking, all of which render this abundantly clear. Thus revolution, as a claiming of the 'for all', does not have the power or strength to claim everyone because we are so firmly 'at home in consciousness' and the willingness to leave that which we know so well is not there for us in the way it is for thinkers like Hegel.[69] For thinkers today it is both difficult to find the strength required to be kindred with Hegel, and the claiming that we claim—and claims us—similarly seems to lack the strength to capture us. Thus the task for those of us who are interested and willing to reencounter Hegel, to be kindred with him, and through him encounter the philosophical as such—that is to give conceptual form to the future—is the path of despair and violence, because it is a path that inverts our world.[70]

However, philosophers are always of their time, and our time, being a time of dark-

68. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. II Plato and the Platonists, 3 vols., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, (henceforth LHP II).

69. Now is not the time to defend this claim, despite this, if Hegel's philosophy is to be comprehensive in the way that is being suggested, it must be able to account for the development of thinking after 1830 and consequently the seeming demise of the Hegelian system. A defence which I believe can be made.

70. Hegel cautions us against thinking that our lack of strength to enter philosophy is related to the obscure or difficulty of its language. This is a criticism regularly made of Hegel's philosophy. However, this attitude totally misses the point of why philosophy is difficult. Hegel explains why his thinking is obscure or difficult via Heraclitus: 'The obscurity in the philosophy of Heraclitus lies essentially in the fact that it expresses a profoundly speculative thought, which is always obscure for the understanding. The concept of the idea is in conflict with the understanding and cannot be grasped by it' (LHP 25-6 II 73). In other words only by dwelling in absolute knowledge, by being inverted, can we make sense of that which appears obscure.

According to Hegel the only reason that Plato is not labelled obscure as Heraclitus, is because people generally fail to see the truly speculative nature of his writing. Hegel argues that the 'mythic form of the Platonic Dialogues makes […] them the source of misunderstandings' (LHP 25-6 II 182), that is, there is a tendency in the Plato scholarship to miss the *philosophical* dimension of Plato's thought. There is a failure to differentiate Plato's words that operate 'wholly in the representational mode' (LHP 25-6 II 183), from his philosophical thought. Hegel makes mention of some well worn common misunderstandings such as when in the *Meno* (81c-d) and *Phaedo* (72e-7a) Plato talks of the existence of the human soul before a person's birth: 'But that cannot be found in Plato's philosophy' even though it is 'what Plato's text literally says' (LHP 25-6 II 183). To be sure for Hegel in Plato's philosophy 'the spiritual element belongs to thinking' (LHP 25-6 II 176), thus when Plato 'speaks of the Ideas as a cardinal point, and they are in fact the cardinal point of his philosophy. He speaks of them as independent [*selbständig*], which makes it easy to go on to portray them in the manner of the modern philosophy of the understanding, as separate actualities, as substances, as daemons or as angels; whereas they were indeed more in the nature of philosophical views [*Ansichten*]' (LHP 25-6 II 183).

It is the 'Greek science', presented by Plato and Aristotle, 'where objective thought shapes itself into a whole. Plato's thought is pure but concrete—it is the idea or thought, but the thought is inwardly self-determining' (LHP 25-6 II 14). Yet for Hegel, Plato's thought remains in abstraction as the 'idea only in its form of its universality', and it is not until Aristotle that thought becomes active, 'that is self-determining through activity' (LHP 25-6 II 14). If what I am suggesting has value the activity that comes to philosophy with Aristotle's thought becomes essential to the development and initiation of thought in the modern period.

ness, hides from us our ability to occupy or fully dwell in the dwelling space that Hegel has attempted to make explicit through his philosophy—what seemed so apparent to the thinkers in the period after the French Revolution is now less so. The philosopher today finds him or herself tragically caught in a shadow cast from the future, caught between the existing empirical world and the speculative beyond of absolute knowledge.[71] That we cannot easily dwell with Hegel is apparent to all those who try to encounter him philosophically. One possible explanation for this is that the subject of address for great philosophers is the subject of the future, in some sense the speculative philosopher is *from* the future, is a human that has realized their 'nature' in the 'achieved community of minds' (PS ¶ 69), a person who holds thoughts appropriate to another age. That the place in which we encounter Hegel is one of a future cut-off from our empirical everyday being, renders that encounter tragic. In this way we can understand our present being as would-be philosophers, as existing in the shadows of the spirits of the future. However, the business of philosophy is what *is*, not what *ought* to be. But this is no problem for Hegel because spirit as absolute negativity comes on the scene in its simple notion or its principle, it anticipates its actualization as its goal, an actualization that is in the future. To be sure, what *is*, is a shadow cast from the future; Hegel's recollection is a recollection of the future.[72]

Paul Ashton
Philosophy Program
LaTrobe University

Liberal Arts Program
Victoria University
Melbourne, Australia

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beiser, Frederick C., *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002.

Burbidge, John W., *Hegel's Systematic Contingency*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Carlson, David Gray, *A Commentary to Hegel's Science of Logic*, New York, Palgrave

71. For an exploration of this idea in terms of the Platonic philosopher see Vassilacopoulos, 'Plato's *Republic* and the End of Philosophy'. The language of 'dwelling' has also been taken from this work.

72. As an interesting aside, the famous last lines of the *Phenomenology* are a misquote from Schiller's poem *Die Freundschaft*: 'From the chalice of this realm of spirits / foams forth for Him his own infinitude' (PS ¶ 808). However, what Schiller actually says is '… of this realm of shadows' not spirits. Hegel draws on this passage from Schiller a number of times (usually citing it accurately), most notably in the introduction to the *Science of Logic* where he describes his speculative logic as 'a realm of shadows' (SL 58).

Macmillian, 2007.
Cieszkowski, August, *Selected writings of August Cieszkowski*, ed. and trans. Andre Liebich, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979.
Cieszkowski, August, 'Prolegomena to Historiosophie', in *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology,* ed. and trans. Lawrence S. Stepelevich, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 53-90.
Cieszkowski, August von Count, *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*, Berlin, Veit, 1838.
Dove, Kenley R., 'Hegel's Phenomenological Method', *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1970, pp. 615-41.
Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith and Rupert Sawyer, New York, Pantheon, 1972.
Habermas, Jürgen, 'Labour and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena Philosophy of Mind', in *Theory and Practice,* trans. John Viertel, Boston, Beacon Press, 1973, pp. 142-69.
Habermas, Jürgen, 'On Hegel's Political Writings', in *Theory and Practice,* trans. John Viertel, Boston, Beacon Press, 1973, pp. 170-94.
Habermas, Jürgen, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, 2nd ed., London, Heinemann, 1981.
Habermas, Jürgen, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996.
Harris, H. S., *Hegel: Phenomenology and System*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1995.
Harris, H. S., *Hegel's Ladder*, 2 vols., Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997.
Harris, H. S., *Hegel's Ladder*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997.
Hegel, G. W. F., *Philosophy of Nature: Being Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, 1830*, trans. M. J. Petry, 3 vols., London, George Allen & Unwin, 1970.
Hegel, G. W. F., *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1977.
Hegel, G. W. F., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, New York, Oxford, 1977.
Hegel, G. W. F., *The Encyclopaedia Logic (1830), with the Zusätze: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. Theodore F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1991.
Hegel, G. W. F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. III Medieval and Modern Philosophy, 3 vols., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
Hegel, G. W. F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. II Plato and the Platonists, 3 vols., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
Hegel, G. W. F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. I Greek Philosophy to Plato, 3 vols., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
Hegel, G. W. F., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Allen Wood (ed.), trans. H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Hegel, G. W. F., *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1997.

Hegel, G. W. F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825-6*, Robert F. Brown (ed.), trans. R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris, vol. 2 Greek Philosophy, Oxford, Oxford, 2006.

Hegel, G. W. F., *Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), Together with the Zusätze*, M. J. Inwood (ed.), trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller with revisions and commentary by M. J. Inwood, Oxford, Oxford, 2007.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1825-1826*, trans. Robert F. Brown, J. M. Stewart, and H. S. Harris, vol. 3 Medieval and Modern Philosophy, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, P. C. Hodgson (ed.), trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, vol. III The Consummate Religion, 3 vols., Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998.

Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche: Vol. III: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics & Vol. IV: Nihilism*, David Farrell Krell (ed.), trans. Joan Stambaugh, David Farrell Krell, and Frank A. Capuzzi, vol. 3 & 4, 4 vols., San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Houlgate, Stephen, *An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy: Freedom, Truth and History*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 2005.

Houlgate, Stephen, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity*, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 2006.

Hyppolite, Jean, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1974.

Knox, T. M., 'Hegel and Prussianism', in Jon Stewart (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1996, pp. 70-81.

Lukács, György, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations Between Dialectics and Economics*, London, Merlin Press, 1975.

Maker, William, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994.

Malabou, Catherine, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic*, trans. Lisabeth During, New York, Routledge, 2004.

Nicolacopoulos, Toula, *The Radical Critique of Liberalism: In Memory of a Vision*, Seddon, re.press, 2008.

Nicolacopoulos, Toula and George Vassilacopoulos, *Hegel and the Logical Structure of Love: An Essay on Sexualities, Family and the Law*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999.

Nicolacopoulos, Toula and George Vassilacopoulos, 'Philosophy and Revolution: Badiou's Infidelity to the Event', *Cosmos and History*, vol. 2, no. 1-2, 2006, pp. 210-25.

Parry, David M., *Hegel's Phenomenology of the "We"*, New York, P. Lang, 1988.

Pinkard, Terry P., *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Ritter, Joachim, *Hegel and the French Revolution: Essays on the Philosophy of Right*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1982.

Stewart, Jon (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1996.

Taylor, Charles, *Hegel*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Vassilacopoulos, George, 'Plato's *Republic* and the End of Philosophy', *Philosophical Inquiry*, vol. XIX, no. 1-2, 2007, pp. 34-45.

Wood, Allen W., *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.